

DETENTION OF ALAN P. GROSS

HON. JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2011

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for the immediate release of Alan P. Gross on humanitarian grounds. Mr. Gross, a 62-year-old international development specialist, has been held in a Cuban detention facility for the last two years. Mr. Gross has worked in community and international development for over 25 years and his work has positively impacted the lives of people in over 50 countries, including the West Bank, Gaza, Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, Gambia, Kenya, South Africa, and Ghana.

At the time of his arrest, Mr. Gross was working on behalf of the US Agency for International Development with the peaceful, non-dissident Jewish community to help them establish an Intranet and improve access to the Internet. Logically, Mr. Gross brought basic technological equipment with him to assist in achieving that goal. Although he followed all appropriate procedures and declared the equipment in customs, Cuban authorities would use unsupported claims of illegality of this equipment as grounds for his imprisonment.

Shortly after his arrest on December 3, 2009, Cuban military officials placed Mr. Gross in a maximum-security military hospital, and held him for 14 months without charge. In February of this year, he was finally charged with "acts to undermine the integrity and independence" of Cuba. After a mere two day trial, he was convicted, and sentenced to 15 years in prison. His appeal to the Cuban Supreme Court was denied on August 5.

Mr. Speaker, Alan Gross is an elderly development worker, not a spy. He doesn't speak Spanish, making him an unlikely subject in the subversion of the Cuban government. It is insulting to suggest that Mr. Gross deserves a 15 year sentence for possessing "illegal" equipment that Cuban authorities could have seized upon his entrance into the country. But these elements of this gross miscarriage of justice pale in comparison to the humanitarian affront of keeping him in Cuban custody.

Mr. Gross' health has deteriorated tremendously during his incarceration. He has lost approximately 100 pounds and suffers from a number of serious health issues, some of which may become permanent. In addition, his family's health and financial problems have placed him under extreme mental strain.

In August of 2010, Mr. Gross' 26-year-old daughter was diagnosed with breast cancer. She underwent, and is currently recovering from a double mastectomy. His wife, Judy, recently underwent surgery as well, missing a long period of work due to her illness. His 89-year-old mother was diagnosed with inoperable cancer in February of this year. This, combined with Mr. Gross' continued incarceration, has resulted in tremendous financial hardship for his entire family, and his inability to support them has greatly pained Mr. Gross.

In light of these events and his unjust sentence, I call on the Cuban Government to immediately release Mr. Gross so he may receive medical treatment and help his family through this tumultuous time.

CONGRATULATING THE JOHN GLENN HIGH SCHOOL SPELL BOWL TEAM

HON. JOE DONNELLY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2011

Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the John Glenn High School Spell Bowl team of Walkerton, Indiana for winning the Class II Indiana Academic Spell Bowl held on November 12, 2011 at Purdue University. Their score of 84 out of a possible 90 far surpassed runner up Plymouth High Schools' score of 75.

The spellers practiced three times a week in preparation for their fifth consecutive state championship. The team consisted of Elly Alexander, Ariel Clark, Jake Coday, Ann Heckman-Davis, Cole Jacobson, Miranda Kafantaris, Kim Lord, Chris Mahank, Gabby Marek, Erin Patterson, Maddy Piedra, Paige Reed, Holly Rowe, Rebecca Shoue, J.J. Silvey, Justina Weiss, and Karena Weiss.

The team is coached by Paul Hernandez who has led the school to 16 state titles in 25 years. This outstanding achievement was recognized by the Indiana Association of School Principals who named Mr. Hernandez the 2011 Academic Coach of the Year. The only coach to win state Spell Bowl Championships in two different divisions, he is the English Department Chairman, tutors the Academic Decathlon Team and supervises the nationally recognized high school literary magazine, "Aerial."

Again, I rise to offer my congratulations to the members of the John Glenn High School Spell Bowl team and their dedicated coach for their extraordinary accomplishments throughout the competition.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. WILLIAM L. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2011

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, on November 4th, 2011, I missed a series of votes to attend the Change of Command ceremony at Fort Drum, New York. If I had been present, I would have voted as follows:

On Rollcall 829, Ordering the Previous Question providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2838) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal years 2012 through 2015, and for other purposes, I would have voted Nay.

On Rollcall 830, Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2838) to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal years 2012 through 2015, and for other purposes, I would have voted Nay.

On Rollcall 831, To facilitate the hosting in the United States of the 34th Americas Cup by authorizing certain eligible vessels to participate in activities related to the competition, and for other purposes, I would have voted Yea.

On Rollcall 832, Cummings of Maryland Amendment No. 3, I would have voted Yea.

On Rollcall 833, Thompson of Mississippi Amendment No. 4, I would have voted Nay.

On Rollcall 834, Napolitano of California Amendment No. 6, I would have voted Yea.

On Rollcall 835, Bishop of New York Amendment No. 7, I would have voted Yea.

On Rollcall 836, Slaughter of New York Amendment No. 8, I would have voted Yea.

IN RECOGNITION OF TIME WARNER CABLE

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2011

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Time Warner Cable for its investment in local television news coverage, specifically for opening a Washington, D.C., news bureau that will cover stories and events here in Washington that are important to the communities its 14 local news channels serve throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, TWC is dedicating significant resources to high quality local news channels that provide critical local news, weather, traffic and sports coverage in the communities that they serve. We live in an age when local television news is disappearing and hometown newspapers are fast becoming a thing of the past. However, in the Charlotte area stations remain committed to reporting in-depth local stories. It is important to make note of the rare times when we see investment in local news coverage. I applaud Time Warner Cable for recognizing the importance of local news, for investing in it and creating jobs while providing this critical service to their customers and my constituents. Certainly it is with more local news coverage that we will have a better informed citizenry, which can only advance our great country.

HONORING THE UNIFICATION OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMUNICATIONS UNION AND THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS AND AEROSPACE WORKERS

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2011

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the January 1, 2012 unification of the Transportation Communications Union (TCU) and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW).

These two distinguished unions, with railroad roots, are on course to become one strong voice for hundreds of thousands of middle-class working men and women across America.

In 1888, 19 machinists meeting in a locomotive pit in Atlanta, Georgia formed what is now IAMAW, commonly known as the "Fighting Machinists." Throughout their 123 year history, the Fighting Machinists have grown to represent workers in several industries, including: aerospace, transportation, government, automotive, defense, and woodworking.

Today's TCU is also one union made of many. At its core is the union founded in 1899, which became the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks. In 1919, the union became the

Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees. To further reflect the diversity of the union's membership, the delegates to the 1987 Convention voted to become TCU.

By joining the ranks of the Machinists, TCU will help strengthen the organization's membership and the overall labor movement. For more than a century, both TCU and IAMAW have stood for the welfare and prosperity of their members. Today, these unions continue to fight on behalf of their members who exemplify the values of hard work, faith, family, and community.

This unification not only brings together two unions, but also two dedicated presidents—Tom Buffenbarger and Bob Scardelletti. Tom Buffenbarger began his career as a journeyman tool and die maker at General Electric's jet engine plant in Evendale, Ohio. In 1997, he became the youngest IAMAW President in its history. Bob Scardelletti, a life-long railroader, started out as a yard clerk in Cleveland with the New York Central Railroad in 1967. In 1971, he took on his first union position and by 1991 was elected TCU president and has been re-elected four times.

TCU and IAMAW were fundamental in building the American middle-class, and have a vital role today in preserving the American dream for working families. Their combined strength will provide continued leadership throughout the labor movement, particularly in the transportation industry. It is my pleasure to honor this historic event and congratulate their members as they join forces under the new TCU/IAMAW.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2011

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 860, 861, and 862. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on all three.

HONORING LIZ COVENTRY

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2011

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, today I extend my deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the family of Liz Coventry. Liz passed away on October 26, 2011, after waging a valiant battle against cancer. Throughout many years of my public service—from my Congressional campaign days to my early days as a U.S. Congressman, Liz was an unwaveringly loyal and exceptionally focused member of my team. Whether working on casework for constituents, tirelessly advocating on behalf of veterans, spearheading the annual Congressional Art Competition for my office, or organizing various special projects, Liz took on every endeavor with passion. I cannot imagine the early days of my office without her.

Yet far beyond being an employee, Liz was also a friend. And as anyone who knew Liz would undoubtedly agree, to be able to call

her "friend" is truly an honor. While Liz's daily presence will be acutely missed by those who knew and loved her, the memory of her friendship and her legacy will remain.

I deeply appreciate Liz for her friendship and support, and I honor her for her service to our state and our nation.

A TRIBUTE TO RAY A. HARRIS, RAMIE L. HARRIS, AND SHEY M. HARRIS

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2011

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the lives of Ray A. Harris, Ramie L. Harris and Shey M. Harris, of Marion, Indiana who perished in a tragic plane crash on November 26, 2011. Ray was 46, Ramie was 21, and Shey was 20. I join the Marion community in expressing my deepest condolences to Ray's wife, Sherry, and his son, Blake, who are left to carry on in this world without them. In one tragic day, Sherry lost her husband and two daughters. Likewise, Blake lost his father and two sisters. Other survivors include Ray's parents and in-laws and numerous aunts and cousins. Chris Backus, a student at Indiana Wesleyan University also died in the crash.

As a businessman Ray was a pioneer of sorts in Marion. He moved his car dealership known as Ray Harris Chrysler Jeep from its established location to a new location at Ind. 18 and 1-69. He knew the risks associated with the move but he held a deep desire to make Marion a better place and because Ray was a visionary he knew the new location would grow into something good and benefit the community around it. Ray was a true community leader. He was a supporter of the Marion Giants; served 8 years as the President of the Marion Board of Works; was a member of the Meshingomesia Country Club, the Aero Club, Marion Pilots Club, and the Elks. Ray was a skilled hunter and fisherman. One of his favorite events was the Annual Community School for the Arts, CSA, Go-Kart race.

As busy as Ray was in business and in the community, his family always came first. Ray was an attentive father and husband, rarely missing one of his children's events. Ramie was a 2009 graduate of Marion High School where she played soccer, basketball, and tennis. Ramie's soccer jersey number will be retired in her honor. Ramie also played in various PAL club sports and was the recipient of numerous scholarships. As a student at Marion High School, Ramie was active in Youth for Christ. She was also active in God's House Ministries' Children's Ministry Department. Ramie was a junior at Wheaton College, majoring in pre-med.

Shey was a graduate of Eastbrook High School after having attended Marion High School until her junior year. Shey loved to dance and was majoring in dance with a minor in business at Anderson University at the time of her death. Shey attended and later taught at the Community School of the Arts and taught gymnastics at Mid America. Like her father and sister, Shey's love for the Lord guided her in her daily life. She was involved in the liturgical dance program at her church and

the children's ministry department at College Wesleyan Church.

Ray, Ramie, and Shey will be forever remembered by all who knew them as a loving family who devoted their lives and talents to community and God. In their death their memory will live on through the CSA Ray Harris Family Memorial Endowment Fund that was established at the Community Foundation of Grant County as a way for the community to honor the family. The money from the endowment will go to the organization for the Shey Harris Dance Scholarship, which will be awarded to a student from CSA. The Harris family were key supporters of the organization. Shey distinguished herself as a dancer and choreographer by the choreographing the first commercial CSA did for the Gorman Center for Orthodontics and being the youngest person to teach at the organization at the age of 14. Ramie danced at the school and danced in the first show that CSA ever did. Shey's and Ramie's surviving brother Blake was the CSA's "Go Arts! Go Karts!" 2010 champion when he raced for his father's business. Ray's wife, Sherry, is also active in CSA events and is a former board member.

The Harris family attended God's House Ministries and by all accounts, their lives were guided by their love for the Lord. At times of deep sorrow and grief, I am comforted by Psalm 23.

PSALM 23—A PSALM OF DAVID

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the
paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for
thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff
they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the pres-
ence of mine enemies: thou anointest
my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life: and I will dwell
in the house of the LORD forever.

Today, I pray for all of God's love and healing to be bestowed upon the Harris family.

HONORING BALD ROCK BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 1, 2011

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following Proclamation:

Whereas, Bald Rock Baptist Church has been and continues to be a beacon of light to our county for the past one hundred fifty years; and

Whereas, Pastor Christopher Shipp and the members of the Bald Rock Baptist Church family today continues to uplift and inspire those in our county; and

Whereas, the Bald Rock Baptist Church family has been and continues to be a place where citizens are touched spiritually, mentally and physically through outreach ministries and community partnership to aid in building up our District; and

Whereas, this remarkable and tenacious Church of God has given hope to the hopeless, fed the needy and empowered our community for the past one hundred fifty (150)